

**Meeting Minutes of  
The Governor's Council on Behavioral Health  
8:30 a.m., Thursday, May 13, 2010**

The Governor's Council on Behavioral Health met at 8:30 AM. on Thursday, April 13, 2010, in Barry Hall's Conference Room 126, 14 Harrington Road, Cranston, Rhode Island.

Members Present: Chair, Richard, Leclerc, Bruce Long, Sandra DelSesto, Scotti DiDonato, Mark Fields, James Gillen, Anne Mulready, Reed Cosper, Darlene Price and Elizabeth Earls.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Denise Achin, Department of Education; Frank Pace, DCYF; Sharon Kernan, Department of Human Services; Craig Stenning, Department of MHRH; Kat Grygiel, Office of Rehabilitative Services.

Guests: Ian Knowles, Vivian Weisman, Alice Woods,

MHRH Staff: Charles Williams and Corinna Roy.

Once a quorum was established, the Chair, Richard Leclerc, called the meeting to order at 8:40 A.M. After introductions were conducted, Richard Leclerc entertained a motion to accept the Minutes of March 11, 2010. Bruce Long motioned to approve and it was seconded. Richard Leclerc called for a vote to approve the minutes, and Sandra Delsesto requested an amendment, specifically to change the second to last sentence under DCYF Data Elements to read as follows: "It is a concern that parents who lose their children due to substance use issues also lose their insurance after receiving treatment. This makes it more difficult for them to recover and regain custody of their children due to their lack of access to a continuum of care. This in turn results in increased cost to the state in terms of continued foster care, further treatment and possible other acute health care." Bruce Long also requested an amendment to the first two sentences under Marijuana Legislation to read as follows: "Bruce Long described two cabinets within the legislature that are trying to get legislation passed to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of Marijuana. One part of the cabinet feels that decriminalization is appropriate; the other part of the cabinet believes that decriminalization will lead to savings at the ACI." All were in favor of the amendments and the minutes were approved as amended.

**Subcommittee Reports:**

1. **Transitioning Youth:** Denise Achin reported that the group met on March 26 and had a presentation by Joanne Nannig from ORS. We started a "What's Working, what's not working, recommendations" document that is in draft form-not ready to be distributed to the Council. We will fill in based on our presentations and information reviewed. New members include youth from "The Voice." A youth advocacy group comprised of youth in foster care and young adults who have exited the system. Our next meeting is June 25 from 1-3 in room 126 Barry Hall. We will have a presentation by Adrianna Goode from DLT.
2. **Recovery-Oriented System of Care:** Ian stated that he had distributed the recommendations from the ROSC committee to members through Corinna Roy. Only thing left to do is prioritize the items. Some are doable, some are not as easy and some are more urgent than others. He will await feedback over the next two weeks from the Council please forward it to Corinna or Ian. The workgroup will then present his findings to Director Stenning. He hopes to have a PowerPoint ready for the June meeting.

**Updates from MHRH:** Craig Stenning thanked the two committees for their valuable work both on transitional and recovery issues. He said that in discussions about budget issues and establishing new services systems, including step down systems, he emphasizes the need to truly embrace a recovery model

that moves people in the system instead of letting them stagnate. He stated that it may make planning more difficult but it makes the process more rewarding for clients and staff.

He reported that tomorrow, May 14, at 11:30am the department will have a reception for Amy Kinney, the artist whose work is exhibited in the lobby area. It is a young woman's journey into and out of depression and the use of art to express some of her feelings as she goes through this journey. At this reception the artist will speak briefly about her life. At the presentation there will also be some hands on activities. He encouraged anyone at the meeting to stop by if possible. He noted that the department has gotten strong reaction from individuals who have entered the building and seen the exhibit. He said that he was glad he had invited her to put up the display and that it will be up until the end of May as part of our celebration of May is Mental Health Month.

At the beginning of the week Stenning participated in a press conference with the First Lady for the unveiling of a new web site [www.substancefreekids.ri.gov](http://www.substancefreekids.ri.gov) which is also linked to the MHRH website, the Governor's website and others. He said that on Tuesday he was on the Dan Yorke show for one hour talking about the issues of underage drinking, parental attitudes, and community attitudes.

He said that this past week he hosted a meeting of all the community hospitals in the state to discuss the issue of placement of patients into psychiatric beds within their hospitals. They are attempting to come up with a better triage system for handling cases similar to medical triage. This group met for almost two hours and it was an extremely helpful discussion. We agreed to form a standing committee made up of one representative from each of the hospitals and have already arranged the first meeting of that group. He said he was very pleased that the Health Department joined in the discussion, as they license the hospitals. MHRH certifies the Facility Status of psychiatric wards within hospitals and the Health Department oversees what is called "charity care" which obviously plays into the picture of where those who are uninsured get services.

Elizabeth Earls asked if there were any plans to include community people because discharge planning is important to them. Craig responded that this will occur but that they had wanted the hospitals to be in the room together first and to have one meeting with just one representative from each hospital.

Craig stated that he participated in a meeting this week organized by Michelle Brophy from the Corporation for Supportive Housing to discuss and application for a new series of housing vouchers specifically designed for adults (not elderly) with disabilities. Even though distribution of these vouchers is done through public housing authorities in the state MHRH has tried to be a part of more discussions on housing issues. He said that he was pleased that the corporation for supportive housing put together a small workgroup to push this initiative in RI which is not a competitive application; you have to meet the thresholds of the application and then they hold a lottery to distribute the vouchers. He is hoping that we can receive at least 100 or so vouchers for individuals with disabilities that would assist them in obtaining housing.

Denise Achin stated that as the Transitional Youth workgroup continues with its information gathering that housing and homelessness among youth is one of the issues that has come up. At some point they will want to have someone come in and address housing issues and asked to be told who should be invited to this meeting. Craig responded that Michelle Brophy has been working quite closely with MHRH. Paul Grenon did do some of this work here but has retired and the Department is currently interviewing and that once an individual is hired there will be somebody on staff who will deal with housing and employment issues. He said that he and Michelle are doing a radio show next weekend on housing issues which is the second one they have done on housing.

Also, Last week, Liz, Vivian, Neil and he participated in a day and a half long program called “Living in the New Normal” which is a national program put together by the federal government. It is focused on supporting the children of parents who have been deployed and are living in a “new world” while their parents are away or when they return due to changes in the family structure and the pressure on these kids and the trauma that they may experience should one of the parents be seriously injured or killed in action.

Vivian Weisman stated that it was unclear where the final product was going to go and who was going to facilitate it after the event. Craig said that he had participated in the planning committee for this project and since it is a military operation it is extremely structured from the top.

The department is preparing an application to the Federal Government which was anticipated to be around \$800,000 but is now into the millions for the aftermath of the flood and the implications it has for mental health support for individuals, both children and adults. Again, this is not a competitive application as such; if you meet the criteria you receive the grant.

Craig next spoke on the budget, stating that MHRH is holding its breath the same way everyone else in the state is. He said that he was left to understand that it may come out somewhere around the first week of June. Elizabeth Earls asked if it was a combined budget. He said that that’s the rule but the only person who probably knows is the chairman. Both the Senate and the House budget hearings were held related to MHRH and his presentation took up most of the hearing although there was some testimony from a few of the advocacy groups. There were not a lot of questions and it was very difficult to read either of the committees. There have been no questions asked since the hearing and we continue to move forward with some of the ideas we presented in the budget. The two large initiatives, one in DD and one in mental health, are somewhat different than they were when we planned them. In the DD world we did around 30 meetings with CEO’s and staff from individual agencies and advocate organizations. Stenning sat in on about half of them and got the sense that there was general support for the idea that we need to do rate reform and make the way that we finance the system much more transparent and simpler to understand for everyone’s sake. At the same time there are serious concern about the idea of forming networks so we are taking this input into consideration and will probably be modifying our proposal somewhat.

In terms of mental health, we were looking to moving to a per-person case rate but are probably off of that now and going back to a more traditional fee-for-service type of arrangement which should make some people happy at least. Elizabeth Earls stated that she was not sure who would benefit from that, although payment methods need to change. She felt that the provider’s major concern was the 5.4 million dollar cut.

Craig Stenning replied that in all of our testimony we presented the merits of the theory without defending the savings end of it and if somebody wants to amend that number he would be more than pleased.

Elizabeth Earls asked if it would be appropriate for this council to make a statement about the level of cuts which is 8% as there has been a lot of attention in this budget to the loss on the part of hospitals and feels there has not been enough attention to the impact this cut would have. There was discussion about the cuts affecting MHRH and if there is any area to make cuts and the impact these cuts will have to both the adult and children who are served by programs through MHRH. Motion was made by Elizabeth Earls for a letter to be drafted to this effect, Sandra DelSesto seconded. Earls asked to add a piece to her motion. She expressed concern about another path of reorganization of government whereby MHRH becomes an office or division with OHHS while we cut funds, change payment methodologies and system delivery. Rich said in addition to the 5.4 million in cuts it is suggested that we make a statement concerning possible

reorganization at this point in time and what this might do to the leadership issues, structural issues and clients' wellbeing. Rich asked if there was any objection to including this in the motion there was none. Motion was seconded and carried unanimously and a letter will be generated and sent out very soon.

Upon questioning, Stenning stated that the proposed MHRH name change had passed the house but had not been voted on in the senate yet. Stenning stated that there had been one meeting regarding prevention this month and MHRH is preparing the RFP for the block grant. Liz asked question about the Task Forces and if funding would be level. Stenning stated that the plan was to maintain the present system.

**Updates from DCYF:** Frank Pace represented DCYF at the meeting, and distributed handouts. He noted that Janet had given a comprehensive update the prior month and what he wanted to add was that DCYF had been able to fill some of the Medicaid positions.

The handout showed that the theme for this year's Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is mental health care for young children. Some outcomes of the system of care with that population include reduction of behavioral problems, reduction in caregiver strain among families enrolled in The Positive Educational Partnership (PEP). He stated data also demonstrate a decrease in mental health referrals and social skills referrals at the PBIS/PEP early childhood sites.

He highlighted some of the activities that took place during Children's Mental Health Awareness Day which were held in various locations in the state and were a good kickoff for May as Mental Health Month. The theme this year was Hope, Prevention and Recovery. A parent who had been though PEP spoke about hope and her experience with the program.

Ann asked a question about the RI Early Childhood PEP outcomes and if they were Rhode Island Outcomes. Frank answered that were and that several sites and preschools are doing PEP as well as some other sites such as head start.

**Updates from DHS/Maintenance of Insurance for Parents with Children Removed:** Sharon reported that they are still working on the procurement but that it has been a little more delayed than she thought it would be but they are working on it and hope to get it to the Department of Administration in May. Anyone interested can check the DOA website in approximately 10 days. Rich asked if this was an RFP. Sharon said that it was an LOI.

Regarding the issue of maintenance of health insurance for parents who have lost custody of their children we do have CMS support to fund this as a CNOM. However, we have not have funding set aside for the state match and when I discussed this with Deb Florio in preparation for today she said she thought this would be a DCYF initiative and I suggested that she check with DCYF. If we get the state match we would be able to go forward and provide the coverage.

It was mentioned that there is a good handful of cases where a judge orders DCYF to pay for the recovery and that comes right out of the state dollars anyway so it would be interesting to see what the cost of the state match would be versus what DCYF ends up paying per judge order. Rich said that a search for information may be done through Janet, Craig and perhaps John Young. Another option would be to write a letter to Gary Elexander et al to support the funding of the match for this initiative.

Rich stated that the data elements presentation from the Department of Corrections will be tabled until the next meeting.

Rich asked if there was any old or new business. Jim said that he wanted to make people aware of a couple of things around Recovery Month which is this September. We moved the date of the Recovery Event to 9/11 from 2pm to 7pm at the suggestion of the Waterfire committee. The theme of the Waterfire on that date will be Overcoming Adversity, Facing Life's Challenges and Living United and we will be an official part of Waterfire for the first time. I urge you to take part in this in any way you can. We have some very good support for this from many sponsors and groups including the National Guard. We are the only state that has this unique aspect of not only the recovery through substance abuse treatment participating but also mental health and DD.

Also, A&E and the Recovery Project sponsor one delegate each year to represent the state. This year it will be held in Philadelphia on 9/25. We are looking for people who have a minimum of 10 years in recovery and also qualify in other areas such as community work. So, think about people who would be candidates for this. People are going to be nominated. He asked Corinna to send the link so people could download the application to make the referral. The link for this is: <http://www.aetv.com/real-life-change/index.jsp>

Last, I am a National Recovery Month Planning Partner now and they want to send us tool kits, a how to for recovery month. If you are interested in receiving one please forward your name to me. The kit contains facts, media information "how to" information and other things.

Finally Gillen stated that RICAREs (RI Communities for Addiction Recovery Efforts) will be hosting their 11th Annual Legislative Day on May 19 at the State House to celebrate long-term recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 A.M. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 8, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. in Barry Hall room 126.**